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TAGS: PGOV GY EAID EAGR  
SUBJECT: GUYANA'S RULING PARTY DETERMINES POWERFUL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Classified By: CDA WILLIAMS for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

**¶1.** (SBU) Summary: A low-ranking minister finished a surprisingly high third in party elections as the ruling People's Progressive Party (PPP) held its final congress before the 2011 presidential election. Party delegates selected the 35-person Central Committee that will determine the 18-member Executive Committee that in turn decides the party's nominee and defines its agenda. In his address to the PPP, President Jagdeo again criticized the media for perceived unfair coverage and reiterated his call for the international community to compensate Guyana for the contribution its rainforests make in the fight against climate change. End Summary.

**¶2.** (U) The ruling People's Progressive Party (PPP) held its final Congress before the 2011 presidential elections August 2-3. The 1020 delegates in attendance voted 35 party members onto the new Central Committee, whose primary task is to elect the 18-member Executive Committee in the coming weeks. The Executive Committee will set the party's agenda and ultimately select the PPP's candidate.

**¶3.** (SBU) Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport Frank Anthony finished an unexpectedly high third in the balloting behind President Jagdeo and former president Janet Jagan, and was one of only five elected to serve for the first time on the committee. Minister of Agriculture Robert Persaud, believed to be President Jagdeo's favored successor, finished 9th. Committee elections take place every three years.

**¶4.** (U) In his address, President Jagdeo criticized media for highlighting issues that show the government in a negative light without providing context for the GoG's actions. Jagdeo identified the financing of infrastructure projects such as the repairing of Guyana's sea defenses as challenges for the future. He again pushed the idea that any international agreements succeeding the Kyoto protocol should compensate Guyana for the carbon offsetting its rainforests provide and suggested Guyana's forests are worth hundreds of millions of dollars annually.

**¶5.** (C) Comment: The unexpected third place finish of Frank Anthony, who maintains a low-public profile, and the relatively weak finish of Robert Persaud, who is arguably the Minister most visible in the press, may signify that the Agriculture Minister's support in the party is not as deep as previously thought. It remains to be seen if Anthony, who few considered a power player in intra-party politics, leverages his popularity within the party for a more substantive and powerful portfolio. For the moment, Persaud appears to have the inside track on the nomination provided he does not fall out of favor with Jagdeo. Jagdeo's criticism of the media is part of a sustained government effort to battle media criticism by making counter accusations of bias. End comment.

Williams